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'The next two games are like finals for us if we want to stay in the World Cup' Sven-Goran Eriksson

Match verdicts from Henry Winter, Paul Hayward and Alan Smith



The Daily Telegraph

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Fire at Palace but show goes on

Picture: JAN LEWIS



Smoke billows from the roof of Buckingham Palace last night after a fire broke out in a staff flat in the West Terrace. No members of the Royal Family were in residence. The photograph was taken from the London Eye wheel by a Daily Telegraph reader

By Caroline Davies
Catherine Elsworth
and Nicola Woolcock

FIRE broke out at Buckingham Palace last night as last-minute rehearsals were going on in the gardens for tonight's Party at the Palace rock concert.

No members of the Royal Family were present as the Palace was evacuated. The Queen and Prince Philip had spent the day at Windsor, where they attended a Golden Jubilee service of thanksgiving.

Buckingham Palace confirmed that the concert would go ahead.

"'There is absolutely no question of it not," a spokesman said. It was the first time since the Second World War that the Palace had been evacuated. At the height of the fire, which started in a flat used by a member of staff, flames could be seen coming from the roof of the West Terrace.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus climbed on to the roof, directing hoses towards the centre of the fire.

As thick smoke billowed into the sky, hundreds of pop celebrities, television crews, technicians and engineers rehearsing for the concert were among those evacuated from the area of the gardens where a huge stage has been erected.

Twenty fire engines and about 100 firefighters took part in the operation and four people working on the roof had to be escorted to safety.

Arson was ruled out as investigations began. One fireman was injured by a loose piece of equipment while tackling the flames and was taken to hospital suffering from cuts and bruises around his eyes.

Police said the fire caused "a fair amount of damage", but no treasures were believed to have been harmed. Valuable artefacts in rooms near the fire were moved to safety. Carpets were damaged by water from burst pipes and two ceilings, one glazed and one plaster, were also affected.

Two and a half tons of fireworks are due to be launched from the Palace roof and grounds tonight as part of the celebrations. The fireworks were not on the roof when the fire started.

A fire brigade spokesman said the alarm was raised at 6.42pm. It took an hour to contain the fire, which spread to the loft of the East Gallery of the West Terrace, leading from the grand staircase to the ballroom. The ballroom, the site of investitures, had been used for the Royal Ballet performance at Saturday night's Prom at the Palace. The BBC, which organised the event, said that all its equipment had been removed before the fire.

Brian May, guitarist with the rock group Queen, who plans to open tonight's concert by playing the National Anthem from the Palace roof, said that he and other celebrities had been "herded to an area outside the tennis courts".

He added: "Everyone is being fantastic. There is an enormous crowd of extremely famous people here sitting on the lawn chatting on their mobile phones. Everybody is pretty calm. It is not a major alert, as far as I can tell."

Police Sergeant Barry Woods said: "The fire was believed to be in a flat of some description, for one of the domestics, on or near to the roof on the west side of the Palace.

"A fair amount of damage has been caused. Some pipework was damaged as a result of the heat and the damping down. There was also some smoke percolation. Everyone who was nearby was evacuated to the garden area."

Rehearsals started again on the stage at around 8.20pm with Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys.

Nick Vaughan Barrett, from the the BBC's events unit, which is staging the rock concert – to be attended by the Queen and Princes William and Harry – said: "I am told by the people at the Palace that the only thing they are concerned about is water damage now and how to contain that.

"We have lost a couple of hours. But we are well on schedule, so we are very confident about the show. "We are not using the inside of the Palace at all. We are using the gardens and we have our technical set-up down there, so I'm abso-

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John Keegan looks at how Britain has changed during the Queen's reign: Page 18
Golden Jubilee: Pages 2-5 **Royal Couturiers:** Page 14 **Editorial Comment:** Page 19

America will strike first at terrorists, says Bush

By David Rennie
in Washington

THE United States must "take the battle to the enemy" and launch pre-emptive strikes at tyrants and terrorists trying to construct doomsday weapons, President Bush has declared.

Effectively announcing an historic shift in American policy, Mr Bush said: "In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.

"The war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge."

Although the victim of some of history's worst surprise attacks, from Pearl Harbour to September 11, America's military has not carried out pre-emptive attacks, preferring to deter with the threat of overwhelming force. White House officials signalled that the speech unveiled a new security doctrine.

Mr Bush came close to burying two of the key security pillars of the Cold War, when America ensured its security by deterring foes with the threat of massive retaliation and containing them with sanctions and treaties.

He said deterrence "means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend".

"Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies." Officials said this referred to the leaders of Iraq and North Korea.

Much of what Mr Bush told graduating cadets at West Point military academy exposed his impatience and anger with some key US allies. He offered what officials said was a veiled warning to Arab allies, notably Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Some "nations oppose terror, but tolerate the hatred that leads to terror – that must change," he said.

Mr Bush's speech clearly exposed the gulf in thinking between Washington and its allies in Europe, where leaders continue to push for diplomatic solutions to such crises as Iraq's suspected nuclear, chemical and biological programmes.

Mr Bush refused to defend America by "hoping for the best". He derided calls to "put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systematically break them".

He angrily attacked critics who mocked or deplored his "axis of evil" remarks.

''Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. We are in a conflict between good and evil and America will call evil by its name."

A new doctrine: Page 11

In Brief

Wills denial

Michael Wills yesterday insisted that Gordon Brown had nothing to do with the fact that he was brought back into the Government 48 hours after being "sacked" from it by the Prime Minister. *Page 10*

Better liars

Women are more fluent speakers and better liars than men, according to a study that examined the number of "ums" and "ahs" in the speech of both sexes. *Page 7*

Darling clash

Alistair Darling, the Transport Secretary, found himself at odds with Downing Street yesterday after criticising Lord Birt, the Prime Minister's personal adviser. *Page 10*

Gib plans vote

Gibraltar will try to sabotage Tony Blair's negotiations with Spain about its future by holding a snap referendum on the outcome. *Page 12*

England face fight to survive

By Richard Savill
in Tokyo

ENGLAND face an uphill battle to qualify for the second round of the World Cup finals after struggling to a 1-1 draw against Sweden in their opening match in Japan.

David Beckham, the captain, admitted after the game that the team was ''a bit down" but said he had been somewhat comforted that the team did not lose.

The result means England are under pressure to take at least a point from the game against Argentina in the northern Japanese city of Sapporo on Friday if they are to progress. Argentina beat Nigeria 1-0 in their opening game to go top of the so-called "Group of Death".

A downcast Sven-Goran Eriksson, the England coach, said: "We have to look forward with great faith to survive."

England took the lead in the 24th minute when Sol Campbell headed Beckham's corner into the net. However Niclas Alexandersson equalised in the second half following a mistake by the England defender Danny Mills.

Beckham, who was playing his first match since breaking a bone in his foot, was substituted because he was tired after not playing a game for seven weeks.

Beckham said he was taken aback by the level of interest among the Japanese fans, many of whom sported his shirts, haircuts and even his captain's armband.

He said: "I knew there was a lot if interest but I did not expect it to be that big."

The game passed off peacefully without any arrests. Richard Caborn, the sports minister, said in Tokyo that banning orders imposed on more than 1,000 fans preventing them from leaving Britain appeared to have worked.

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Sport: 1-6

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A B C D E F ★

Pilot killed as jet hits M11

By David Sapsted

THE PILOT of a two-seater jet trainer was killed yesterday when his aircraft ran off the end of a runway and crashed on to a motorway.

Police said it was ''an extraordinary piece of luck" that the Czech-built L-39 trainer did not hit any vehicles on either carriageway of the busy M11 in Cambridgeshire. The pilot ejected as the aircraft left the runway at Duxford airfield, home of the Imperial War Museum's historic aircraft collection. His body was recovered from a field beside the motorway.

The second man in the privately-owned aircraft clambered from the wreckage with only minor cuts and bruises.

No names were being issued until next of kin had been told.

The accident occurred shortly after 2pm and a three-mile jam quickly built up. The M11, which runs from east London to East Anglia, reopened between junctions 9 and 11 at 10.30pm after air accident officials had cleared the scene.

The L-39, the standard jet trainer in the Warsaw Pact in the 1970s and 1980s and capable of speeds up to 470mph, had appeared to

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The crashed trainer on the M11, where it missed vehicles

The Daily Telegraph

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Final payment Britain will at last pay off the debts it ran up with the US government to pay for the Second World War in 2006 **32**

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Golden Jubilee

1952 2002

Germans play down attack on monarchy

By Toby Helm in Berlin and Richard Alleyne

A SCATHING attack on the Royal Family and the Golden Jubilee celebrations in a leading German magazine was described yesterday as "unrepresentative" of feelings in the country as a whole.

Despite *Der Spiegel* having a readership of more than a million, the 13-page critique was said to be an "aberration" in an otherwise well-respected publication.

In the article, entitled "The last Queen – Britain celebrates its fading monarchy", the Queen is described as a "wilted leaf" and as probably the last monarch to govern Britain because her successors are "incompetent, unwilling or on drugs". It also suggests that throughout her reign the Queen has been more interested in her corgies than her children and asserts that the crown is now "too big" for a monarch whose country has shrunk into all-round mediocrity.



Der Spiegel's cover

But other German commentators suggested these views were in direct contrast to the high regard Germans had for the British monarchy and the glowing tributes paid to the Queen in other sections of the media there.

Rolf Seelmann-Eggebert, of broadcasting network ARD, one of Germany's foremost Royal correspondents, said: "It's a British decision to have a monarchy – a German publication has no right to make proclamations in this way.

"Republics don't produce the same amount of glamour as monarchist states do, so we import some of yours. Britain at the moment has as much chance of becoming a republic as we have of getting an Emperor in Berlin."

The article, in this week's edition, is a long analysis of the current state of the monarchy and relies in part on interviews with prominent British republicans.

The Queen is said to be a "nondescript housewife of 76 who no longer needs Concorde or a state-sponsored yacht to reach the distant corners of realm".

Britain, it says, has shrunk to "European mediocrity".

But the content contrasts sharply with the respectful coverage of the British Royal Family and the jubilee celebrations in most of the rest of the German media.

Welt am Sonntag congratulated the Queen on her 50 years on the throne. "Your heart is big," it said. "Thanks to you the monarchy is alive. That is why people are celebrating . . ."

Andrew MacKay, Tory MP for Bracknell, said: "My constituency has many British headquarters of German companies such as BMW and Siemens.

"Having met their German managers I can tell you they think very differently from the views in this magazine."

His comments seemed to be borne out by the fact that the German media presence at Saturday's Prom at the Palace was the biggest of any overseas country.

A spokesman for channel ZDF distanced the company from the comments of *Der Spiegel*. "In Germany, people adore the Queen – after all, she is German!" he said.

Picture: REUTERS



The Duke of York chats to Japan's Crown Princess Masako in Tokyo yesterday

Queen is the most fantastic mother, says Duke of York

By Caroline Davies

THE Duke of York paid his own tribute to the Queen yesterday, making clear his belief that she would serve the country for as long as she could, and praising her dedication and resilience.

Speaking from Japan, where he watched England's 1-1 draw with Sweden, he spoke of his relationship with her as a son.

"The nation's embodiment is the monarch, and the monarch happens to be my mother," he told BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. "It is a combination that is both fascinating and quite difficult and I would say probably impossible for anybody, except the four of us, to understand.

"I think the four of us children have a perspective that is unique.

"From our perspective she is the most fantastic mother – has been and always will be – and as our monarch we are completely devoted to her and to the service of her."

The 42-year-old prince, who recently retired from the Navy, added: "As one grows up, and particularly after one joins the Armed Forces, one looks at the monarch in a different way. From just being mother to me, she also became the Queen, and the epitome of what one is actually serving.

"She is somebody for whom I have tremendous respect as a serving officer, and undying and devoted love as a son."

He recalled the funeral of the Queen Mother, when the Queen was applauded by crowds of people at the roadside: "The applause was uplifting. It was an extraordinary emotional high. The Queen was borne along back to the Palace on this applause."

Celebration highlights

Monday

Windsor Morning: Queen watches Golden Jubilee Parade
Slough 1pm: Launch of BBC Music Live as start of music festival in 200 towns and cities, with a massed rendition of *All You Need Is Love*
Isle of Wight: 25,000 capacity rock concert in Newport
London 11am to 6pm: BBC Music Live Commonwealth music festival in Hyde Park
7.30pm to 10.30pm: Party at the Palace. Both to be shown on giant screens around Britain
10.40pm: Queen lights beacon on Queen Victoria Memorial on The Mall with fireworks
Luton: International Carnival – biggest one-day carnival in Britain

Tuesday

London 10.40am: State procession from Buckingham Palace to St Paul's Cathedral
11.30am: State Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's
1.45pm to 6pm: Carnival in The Mall

TV/Radio Coverage

BBC 1

Monday 2pm to 2.30pm: London prepares for the Jubilee with David Dimbleby
5pm to 10.30pm: Party at the Palace with Jamie Theakston and Sophie Raworth
10.30pm to 11.15pm: The Party in The Mall

Tuesday: 9.25am to 11.30am: The State Procession
11.30am to 12.50pm: State Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's
1.10pm to 2pm: Guildhall Banquet
2pm to 6.10pm: Carnival in The Mall

ITV

Monday: 10.15pm to 11.15pm: Fireworks display at Buckingham Palace

Tuesday: 9.25am to 9.35am: Trevor Macdonald with preview of day's events
12.15pm to 1.45pm: State Procession
1.45pm to 3.30pm: This Morning with live jubilee reports
3.30pm to 6.30pm: Jubilee Pageant

Sky News

Monday: Broadcasts throughout the day from street parties, pop concert and lighting of the jubilee beacons.

Tuesday: Live coverage of celebrations

The weather forecast for today, Monday June 3

General situation **Overnight thunderstorms clearing the east coast. Then sunshine and showers, heaviest in the north-west. Many central and southern areas will stay dry.**

SE England, London, E Anglia: Overnight thundery rain clearing to leave a mostly dry day with sunny spells and just an occasional light shower. Light westerly winds. Fresher. Max temp 64-70f (18-21c). Tonight, clear. Min temp 46-52f (8-11c).

Cent S & SW England, Midlands, Channel Is, Wales: Mainly dry with sunny spells and just the odd light shower. Gentle westerly winds. Max temp 59-64f (15-18c). Tonight, mainly dry. Min temp 45-50f (7-10c).

E & NE England: Overnight thundery showers clearing to leave a bright afternoon with just the odd light shower. A light westerly wind. Max temp 57-63f (14-17c). Tonight, clear spells. Min temp 43-48f (6-9c).

Cent N & NW England, Lake Dist, IoM, N Ireland: Bright spells and scattered showers, some heavy. Moderate west to south-westerly winds. Max temp 55-61f (13-16c). Tonight, showers. Min temp 45-50f (7-10c).

SW & NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, W Isles, Orkney, Shetland: Showers or longer spells of rain, including some heavier bursts. Brisk south-westerly winds. Max temp 54-59f (12-15c). Tonight, rain. Min temp 43-48f (6-9c).

SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Moray Firth: Sunny spells and scattered showers, many of which will be heavy. A moderate southerly breeze. Max temp 55-61f (13-16c). Tonight, clear spells. Min temp 41-46f (5-8c).

Sea forecast

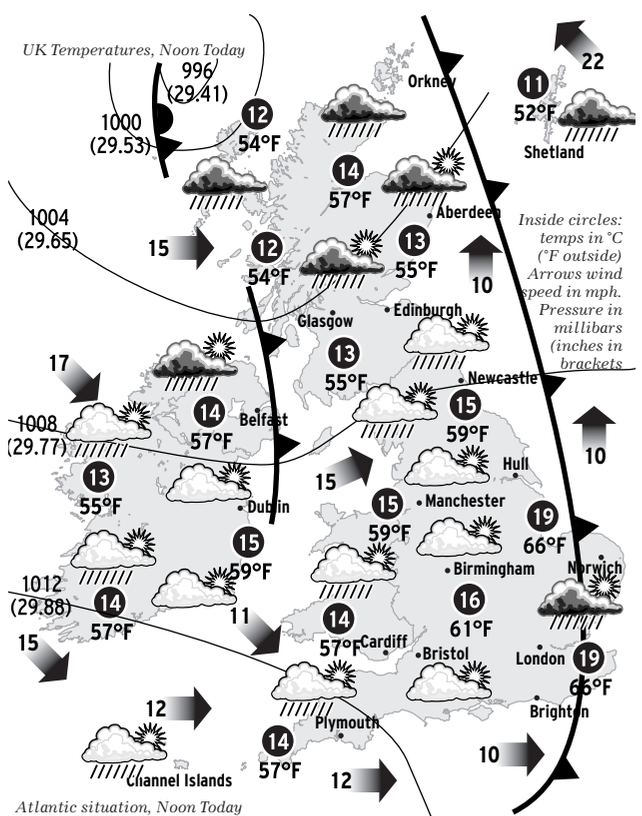
S North Sea: Gentle south to south-westerly winds. Heavy, thundery showers. Poor visibility. Slight seas.

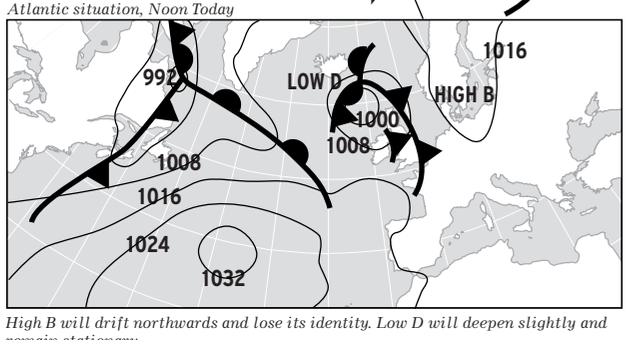
Dover Strait, English Channel: Gentle westerly winds. Mostly fair. Good visibility. Slight seas.

St George's Channel, Irish Sea: Gentle westerly winds. Mainly fair. Good visibility. Slight seas.

Outlook: **Tuesday will stay showery across the UK. Northern and western areas will have the heaviest and most frequent showers with more prolonged rain possible in western Scotland. Many eastern areas will stay dry, especially near the coast. Wednesday will be unsettled with showers, heaviest inland.**

UK Pollen forecast: Moderate to high.





High B will drift northwards and lose its identity. Low D will deepen slightly and remain stationary.

British readings

Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max °F	Max °C	
Aberdeen	0.7	.02	59	15	rain
Anglesey	3.4	.06	68	20	showers
Aspatria	0.7	.16	64	18	rain
Aviemore	1.0	.02	64	18	showers
Belfast	0.8	.01	63	17	rain
Birmingham	**10.5**	**0**	**73**	**23**	**bright**
Bognor	10.3	0	66	19	sunny
B'mouth	11.5	0	68	20	sunny
Bristol	11.8	0	75	24	sunny
Buxton	9.1	0	73	23	sunny
Cardiff	**7.8**	**0**	**73**	**23**	**sunny**
Colwyn Bay	4.1	.10	73	23	cloudy
Cromer	13.2	0	70	21	sunny
Eastbourne	14.2	0	66	19	sunny
Edinburgh	**0.5**	**.25**	**63**	**17**	**showers**
Eskdalemuir	0.3	.31	63	17	rain
Exmouth	9.5	0	64	18	sunny
Falmouth	3.2	0	61	16	cloudy
Folkestone	14.7	0	73	23	sunny
Glasgow	**0.5**	**.13**	**64**	**18**	**showers**
Guernsey	5.3	.11	72	22	thunder
Hastings	13.3	0	73	23	sunny
Hayling Is	13.3	0	73	23	sunny
Herne Bay	13.9	0	75	24	sunny
Hunstanton	13.0	0	75	24	sunny
Isle of Man	0.8	.36	61	16	rainam
Isle of Wight	11.8	0	68	20	sunny
Jersey	11.5	.01	82	28	thunder
Keswick	1.1	.17	70	21	cloudy
Kinloss	0.9	.05	66	19	cloudy.
Leeds	**5.7**	**0**	**73**	**23**	**bright**
Lerwick	0	.03	54	12	rain
L'hampton	11.6	0	70	21	bright
London	**13.3**	**0**	**81**	**27**	**sunny**
	(Min temp 54 12)				
Lowestoft	11.5	0	63	17	sunny
Manchester	**7.5**	**0**	**75**	**24**	**sunny**
	(Min temp 54 12)				
Margate	12.3	0	72	22	sunny
Morecambe	1.3	.22	66	19	thunder
Newcastle	**–**	**.14**	**64**	**18**	**showers**
Newquay	3.7	0	57	14	dull
Norwich	12.8	0	70	21	sunny
Poole	8.7	0	70	21	sunny
Ross-on-Wye	9.2	0	77	25	sunny
Saunton	5.8	0	70	21	sunny
Scarborough	9.5	0	66	19	sunny
Skegness	9.7	0	63	17	sunny
Southend	11.2	0	64	18	sunny
Southport	–	.26	64	18	thunder
Stornoway	3.2	.02	55	13	rain
Swanage	8.5	0	64	18	sunny
Teignmouth	7.4	0	64	18	sunny
Tenby	4.3	.04	61	16	thunder
Tiree	0	.20	55	13	showers
Torquay	9.4	0	64	18	sunny
Weymouth	10.4	0	63	17	sunny

Lighting up London 9.10pm to 4.47am, Manchester 9.30pm to 4.44am.
Sun rises 4.48am, sets 9.10pm. **Moon rises** 2.21am, sets 12.49pm.
High water Bristol 1.06am (9.8m), 1.34pm (9.5m); Liverpool 5.32am (7.5m), 6.18pm (7.1m); London B'ge 8.17am (6.0m), 8.24pm (5.6m);
Yesterday's warmest Jersey (Channel Islands) 82F(28c) **Coldest (day)** Lerwick (Shetland) 54F (12c) **Wettest** Shap (Cumbria) 0.71ins **Sunniest** Folkestone (Kent) 14.7hrs

European weather yesterday

Ajaccio	s	73	23	Copenhagen	s	68	20	Locarno	s	79	26	Paris	c	79	26
Akrotiri	s	77	25	Corfu	s	79	26	Luxembourg	f	73	23	Prague	f	63	17
Alicante	s	82	28	Dublin	c	61	16	Madrid	s	84	29	Reykjavik	c	46	8
Amsterdam	f	72	22	Faro	s	68	20	Majorca	s	82	28	Rhodes	s	77	25
Athens	s	81	27	Florence	s	79	26	Malaga	s	73	23	Rome	c	77	25
Barcelona	f	72	22	Frankfurt	f	72	22	Malta	s	77	25	Stockholm	f	73	23
Belgrade	f	66	19	Funchal	c	70	21	Milan	s	82	28	Strasbourg	s	77	25
Berlin	s	66	19	Geneva	s	77	25	Moscow	f	79	26	Tenerife	f	72	22
Biarritz	c	68	20	Gibraltar	f	75	24	Munich	s	64	18	Valencia	s	84	29
Bordeaux	c	77	25	Helsinki	s	72	22	Naples	f	77	25	Venice	s	75	24
Brussels	c	75	24	Innsbruck	s	73	23	Nice	s	72	22	Vienna	c	64	18
Budapest	f	61	16	Las Palmas	c	72	22	Oporto	c	61	16	Warsaw	c	55	13
Cologne	f	73	23	Lisbon	s	70	21	Oslo	c	70	21	Zurich	s	72	22

World weather yesterday

Adelaide	s	59	15	Calgary*	c	61	16	Luxor	f	95	35	Sao Paulo*	f	70	21
Alexandria	c	75	24	Canberra	s	55	13	Melbourne	f	57	14	Seoul	s	81	27
Algiers	s	77	25	Cape Town	s	61	16	Miami*	f	86	30	Seychelles	c	86	30
Anchorage*	r	46	8	Caracas*	s	90	32	Montreal*	c	70	21	Singapore	c	88	31
Ascension*	c	75	24	Casablanca	c	66	19	Nairobi	s	72	22	Sydney	f	59	15
Bahrain	s	108	42	Chicago*	s	86	30	New Delhi	f	93	34	Taipei	c	84	29
Barbados*	f	86	30	Dacca	f	91	33	New Orleans*	s	86	30	Tangier	c	70	21
Beijing	c	82	28	Dallas*	f	86	30	New York*	s	82	28	Tel Aviv	f	77	25
Beirut	s	77	25	Harare	f	81	27	Perth	dr	64	18	Tokyo	c	81	27
Bermuda*	c	75	24	Hong Kong	sh	86	30	Port Stanley*	c	45	7	Toronto*	s	79	26
Bogota*	dr	61	16	Istanbul	s	70	21	Rio de Jan*	f	77	25	Tunis	s	84	29
Boston*	f	81	27	Jeddah	s	95	35	Riyadh	s	108	42	Vancouver*	s	63	17
Bs Aires*	r	61	16	Jo'burg	m	50	10	San Francisco*	c	57	14	Washington*	c	84	29
Cairo	s	81	27	Los Angeles*	s	68	20	Santiago*	r	48	9	Wellington	c	61	16

Key: c-cloudy; dr-drizzle; f- fair; fg- fog; h-hail; m-mist; r-rain; s-sunny; sh-showers; sl-sleet; sn-snow; th-thunder *indicates previous days readings. temperatures (F&C) lunchtime generally

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Golden Jubilee

1952 2002

Stars caught in Palace evacuation

By Hamida Ghafour

IT WAS just before 7pm as pop stars were about to begin rehearsals for tonight's concert that the first flames could be seen over the roof of Buckingham Palace.

Initially it was thought that the fire broke out in the west terrace on the fourth floor but when firemen arrived 20 minutes later, they saw thick, acrid, white smoke billowing from the roof of the East Gallery, a large corridor from the ballroom to the state room.

As the flames grew stronger, firemen in breathing apparatus climbed the roof and directed hoses towards the source of the blaze on the gallery's main staircase.

Within minutes, they ordered a massive evacuation and hundreds of people, including pop stars, television crews and palace officials began leaving the building.

Lianna Whittaker, 16, and her father, Richard, were among the thousands who came out to mark the jubilee. She saw palace staff running across the forecourts.

"We were just soaking up the atmosphere and then suddenly there was all this commotion," she said. "People inside the palace seemed a bit shocked. It all looked a bit chaotic."

Musicians and artists rehearsing for tonight's pop concert were ordered off stage and told to head towards Hyde Park Gate.

Ozzie Osbourne, the rock singer, had just finished a 30-minute set piece and the crew were taking a dinner break when the alarm was sounded.

Crowds hoping to catch a peek of their favourite stars were not disappointed. As police pushed them back to cordon off the building, they could see singers, including Atomic Kitten.

At 7.25pm, television reporters at the Palace said flames were visible on the roof. By then, 12 fire engines were tackling the fire.

Nick Vaughan Barrett, of the BBC's events unit, which is staging the music in the Palace grounds, said none of the equipment for the staging of the show appeared to be involved in the blaze. "The concert equipment and power generators and pyrotechnics for the concert are completely separate from the Palace power operations," he said.

Robert Lacey, a biographer of the Royal Family, was outside the Palace at the time. He said: "It's hardly the Windsor Castle fire. There has been quite a history of fires at royal palaces, with Hampton Court in the 1980s and Windsor Castle in 1992 but this is not on quite the same scale."

By 7.40pm the fire crews had the fire under control. A police spokesman said the smoke had "noticeably declined".

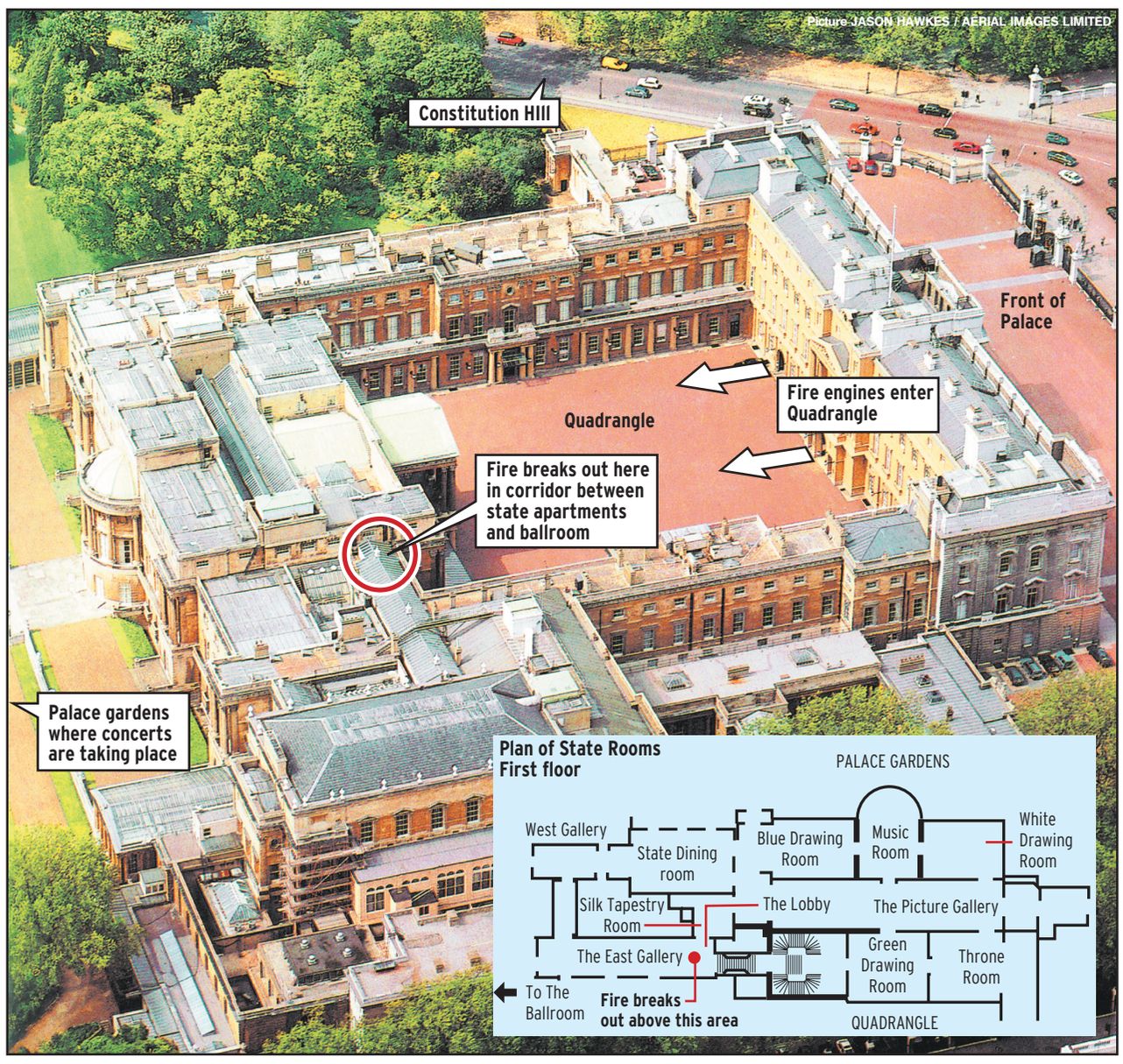
By 8.20pm, officials were confident enough to restart rehearsals.

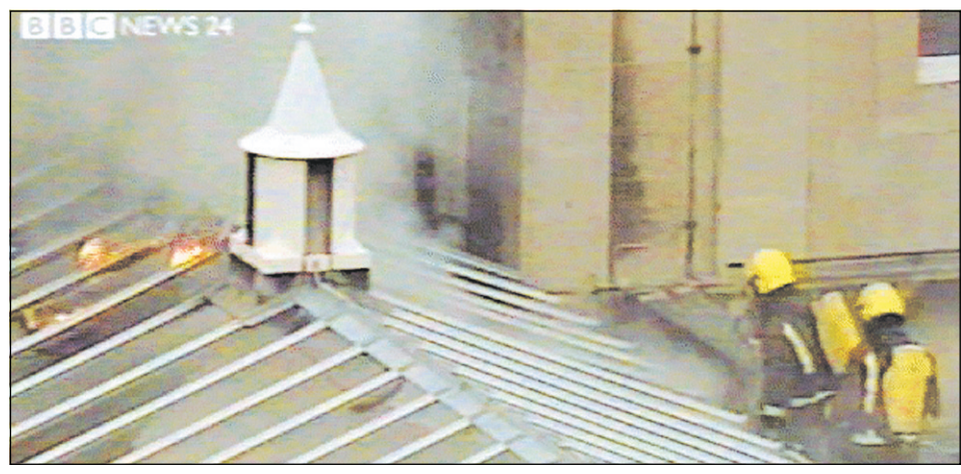
Jamie Theakston, the BBC presenter who is compering the show, said: "We didn't see very much. We were in the middle of rehearsing when it happened. The evacuation was well organised.

"We went up to Hyde Park Gate and waited for about an hour. But when we came back we got on with it. It was business as usual – the show must go on."

Brian Wilson finally took to the stage to go through a series of Beach Boys classics at 8.45pm.

Artists who worked late into the night after the fire included Eric Clapton, Steve Winwood, Joe Cocker, Ray Davies, Rod Stewart and Sir Paul McCartney.





Flames can be seen on the roof of the Palace as firemen approach in breathing apparatus


Atomic Kitten were among the bands rehearsing last night who were escorted from the palace


Flames engulf Windsor Castle in November 1992, the Queen's 'annus horribilis'

Flames revive memories of ruined Windsor Castle

By Nicola Woolcock

BUCKINGHAM Palace was last evacuated when it was bombed in September 1940 during the Second World War, famously prompting Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the then Queen, to remark: "I'm glad we've been bombed. Now I can look the East End in the face."

But references yesterday were more often to the fire at Windsor Castle nearly 10 years ago, in November 1992.

It took five years and £37 million to restore the castle, much of which was destroyed. The fire, which burned for 15 hours and swept through state rooms, started in the Private Chapel when a spotlight was in contact with a curtain. A million and a half gallons of water were used by 250 firemen to put out the blaze, which came at the end of what the Queen later described as her "annus horribilis".

Nine state rooms and more than 100 others, covering an area of nearly 11,000 square yards, or about a fifth of its total area, were damaged or ruined. Members of the Royal Family tried to save art treasures housed in the world's largest occupied castle.

Restoration included replacing the roof of St George's Hall, the ruined 150ft-long ceremonial chamber. Its original plaster ceiling, painted to look like wood, was replaced with a Gothic hammer beam roof using 70 English oaks. The old Private Chapel, destroyed in the fire, was re-created as an ante-room to St George's Hall and a laser-operated fire alarm system was installed.

The Prince of Wales and Prince Philip helped to direct the work. The Queen hosted a party in 1997 to mark completion of Britain's largest historic building restoration of the century.

About 1,500 architects, engineers, craftsmen and labourers were invited to the reception in the restored St George's Hall and the Grand Reception Room, which were both damaged by flames and water.

Peter Brooke, the National Heritage Secretary, was criticised for saying immediately after the fire that taxpayers would fund the repairs. Instead, 70 per cent came from the Royal Family, helped by the proceeds of opening Buckingham Palace to the public.

An entrance fee was also introduced at Windsor Castle for the first time in 1994. The rest of the funding came from the Government's annual contribution to state buildings.

Hampton Court Palace caught fire in 1986. Restoration cost £20 million.

Another blow in tragic year

Continued from Page 1

lutely confident it will all go ahead according to plan.

"There will be a Dunkirk spirit in there. It should be a good night."

More than 12,000 people attended Saturday night's classical music concert and the same number is expected to attend the rock and pop event. A host of stars will be taking part, including Sir Paul McCartney, Ozzie Osbourne, Annie Lennox, the Corrs and Dame Shirley Bassey.

The fire is a further blow to the Queen in a year of personal tragedy following the death of her mother and her sister, Princess Margaret.

It happened as a day of thanksgiving services around Britain in honour of the Queen's 50-year reign came to an end. The Queen and Prince Philip attended the first ecumenical service at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Afterwards, on the 49th anniversary of her Coronation on June 2, 1953, the Queen witnessed four Church leaders put their signatures to a historic covenant to work towards Christian unity.

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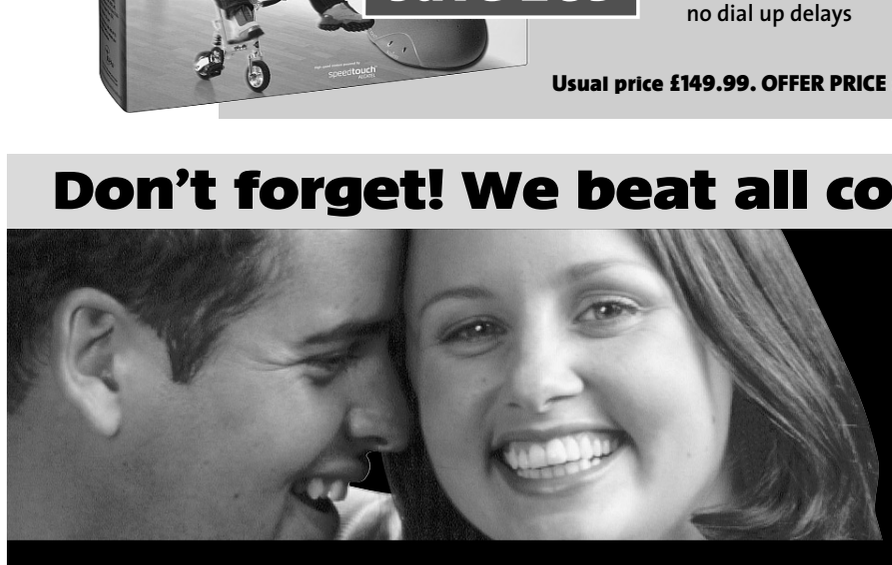
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Golden Jubilee

1952 2002

Prom at the Palace hits the perfect note

By Caroline Davies

Pictures: REUTERS, AP and PA



Camilla Parker Bowles, left, sits close to the Queen in the Royal Box during the Prom at the Palace on Saturday, at which the Prince of Wales's companion appeared relaxed

THE Buckingham Palace gardens will reverberate to a different beat tonight, following the successful Prom at the Palace which opened the Queen's Golden Jubilee weekend celebrations.

Where classical music lovers turned to face the Queen to sing the National Anthem on Saturday, younger members of the Royal Family hope to witness Brian May, the rock guitarist, blast the Anthem from the Palace roof at the start of the star-studded Party at the Palace pop concert.

While Prince William, 19, and Prince Harry, 17, will be present throughout, the Queen intends to see only the last half-hour of the planned event, which features Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Elton John and Eric Clapton.

Much more to her personal taste was the classical concert, the first public concert to be held in the Palace gardens.

The sunshine helped, but even without it the Prom at the Palace would have been a success, such was the uniqueness of the event, to which 12,000 guests, chosen by ballot, were invited.

But it was the 40,000 outside, who thronged to The Mall and London's central parks to watch the concert on giant screens, that truly set the seal on the evening.

All, it appeared, were imbued with a sense of oneness, culminating in three rousing renditions – both inside the Palace and outside – of *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Even the Queen, who seemed genuinely affected by the warmth shown to her, joined in.

It was a night which radiated goodwill, both from the audience and from the Royal Box. The deepest curtsey the Queen received as she entered belonged to Camilla Parker Bowles, long-term companion to the Prince of Wales.

Her presence in the box and proximity to the Queen – close, but not too close – signalled a relaxation of the protocol which has constrained the public relationship between the two.

Seated between Princess Alexandra and Sir Michael Peat, the Keeper of the Privy Purse who is soon to become the Prince of Wales's private secretary, Mrs Parker Bowles appeared relaxed.

Only one moment, perhaps, betrayed any nervousness. As she chatted to Princess Alexandra, a full close-up of her appeared on the huge screen either side of the stage.

Suddenly catching sight of herself, a flicker of alarm crossed her face and she self-consciously lowered her head and abruptly stopped talking.

Eighteen members of the Royal Family were present. Prince Charles talked energetically to the Countess of Wessex, on his left, except when he was paying rapt attention to the music, especially during the performance by the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. It was at a 75th birthday celebration for Rostropovich, hosted by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace, that Mrs Parker Bowles first attended a function with the Queen.

Rostropovich performed in the Palace's Music Room, with live television coverage beaming the performance on to the screens inside the gardens.

For the audience – some in jeans and anoraks, others in evening dress and dinner-jackets – it could only enhance the feeling that they actually were at the Palace. This was further heightened when Zenaida Yanowsky and Roberto Bolle, of the Royal Ballet, danced a *pas de deux* from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* in the Palace Ballroom, also screened live on the outdoor stage.

Earlier, as the guests picnicked on the contents of their jubilee hamper – containing salmon roulade, Golden Jubilee chicken, champagne and two vouchers for the beer tent – thousands of pocket cameras recorded the occasion. The Earl and Countess of Wessex mingled with the crowd. The Queen's camomile lawn – reputed to be the largest in Europe – disappeared under the mass of people.

As the sun faded, people took their seats before the large stage framed by huge replicas of the crowned gold lion and silver unicorn, supporters of the Royal Arms.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, the opera singer, said afterwards: "You look at the Royal Box and suddenly realise what a great event it is. I don't often get nerves, but it was a bit strange."

Julian Bliss, the clarinet prodigy who celebrates his 13th birthday today, was clearly a royal favourite.

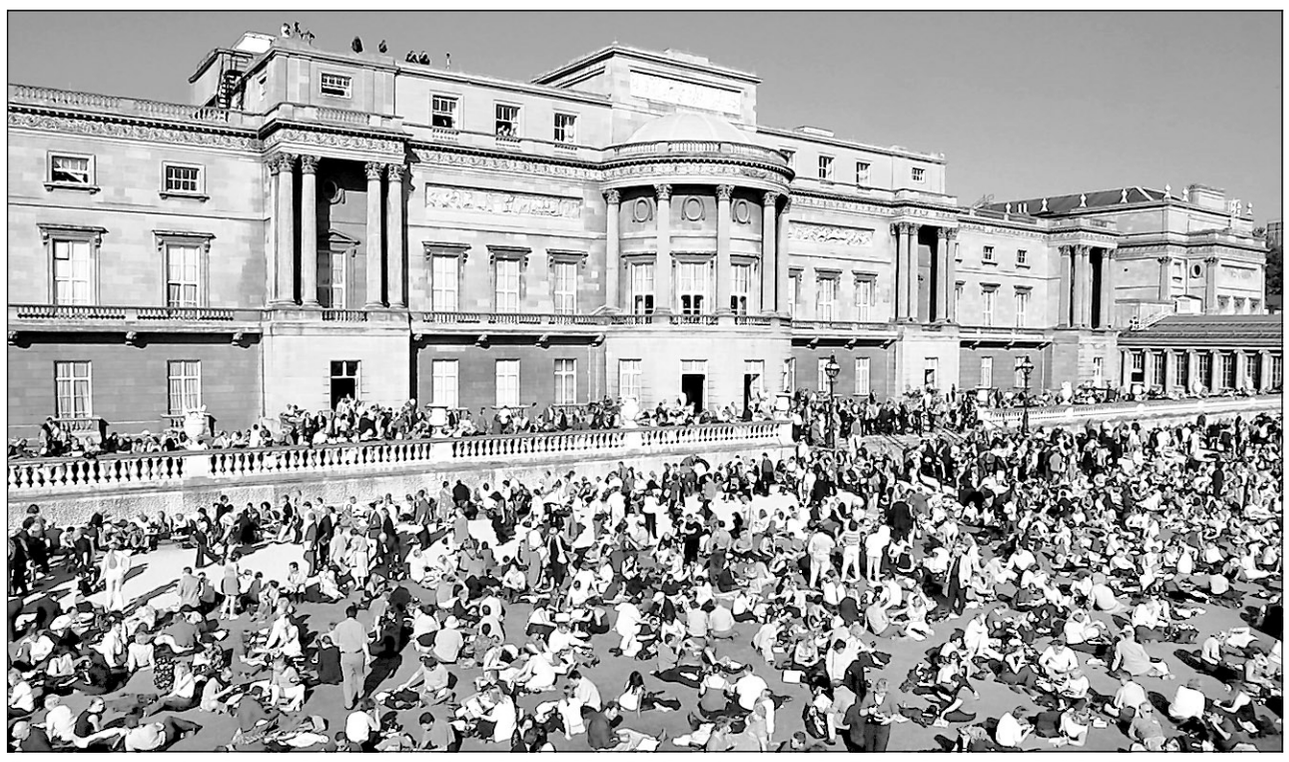
Prince Philip paid particular attention, leaning forward and smiling throughout the boy's six-minute performance. "It doesn't get any better than this," Julian said later. For Roberto Alagna, the tenor, it was "like a fairytale, being here". He and his wife, Angela Gheorghiu, who performed from Puccini and Verdi, toasted the Queen on stage with champagne.

As the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus filled the gardens with Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, fireworks burst over London's most secret garden. The climax was *Land of Hope and Glory*, sung by the flag-waving audience to Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*. The crowd then faced the Royal Box to sing the *National Anthem*. The Queen reciprocated with waves and smiles.

In another unprecedented gesture, she joined performers and members of her family on the Queen Victoria Memorial in The Mall, and acknowledged the tens of thousands who had wanted to join in the party, no matter what.



The soprano Angela Gheorghiu in full voice at the concert



Concert-goers enjoy the sunshine and tuck into their Golden Jubilee picnics on the Palace lawn ahead of the Prom



A screen transmits Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's performance to the crowd outside the Palace



Julian Bliss: favourite

Patriotic music fans serenade the Queen

By Charles Starmer-Smith

THE Queen emerged from Buckingham Palace to greet the crowd following the Prom on Saturday.

Flanked by Prince Philip and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, she walked through the central entrance and smiled and waved from a temporary stage as well-wishers among the 50,000-strong crowd sang "For she's a jolly good fellow".

"It was the Queen's decision," said a Palace spokesman. "The announcement was made just an hour before the concert began – it was just something that she really wanted to do."

Despite missing out on the 12,000 free tickets, tens of thousands of people still congregated outside Buckingham Palace and along the Mall, eager to be part of the jubilee celebrations of classical music, dance and fireworks.

At the classical concert the day had begun slowly with tourists mingling with stilt-walkers, impersonators and jugglers around Queen Victoria's monument.

By 4pm, people had begun reserving the prime spots in front of the 11 giant screens along the Mall, Trafalgar Square and outside Buckingham Palace. Children covered in Union Jack paraphernalia, complete with tiaras and crowns, happily perched on the main fountain outside Buckingham Palace as temperatures soared.

In St James's Park, hampers were laden with lavish spreads that would have put to shame the jubilee chicken salads and champagne being gorged within the Palace gates.

Valerie and Paul Stowe, both 67, from Edinburgh, had travelled down for the concert.

"We had to be here. It was an early start this morning but we so wanted to be part of the atmosphere," said Mrs Stowe. "We were both here in 1977 and that was the last time we had so much bubbly. It's what really makes us feel British."

By the time Michael Parkinson's face was beamed across 40 countries as he announced the start of proceedings, each of the screens were surrounded by a sea of Union Jacks and the arrival of each royal brought a resounding cheer.

The patriotic crowds, undoubtedly appreciative of the musical talents of Mstislav Rostropovich and the artistry of Roberto Bolle, were keenly awaiting the fireworks and prom favourites.

When the fireworks did light up the sky high above the Palace, there was a swell of excitement as people hurried towards the gates in search of a better vantage point.

Children were hoisted on to shoulders as a rousing rendition of the National Anthem provided a fitting finale.

Land of Hope and Glory sums up an evening of joyous celebration

Prom at the Palace
Buckingham Palace

ENJOYMENT was the keynote in the Jubilee Prom's festive potpourri of popular classics.

The organisers had neatly sidestepped any possible controversy as to which of our living composers should write a special commemorative piece, by the simple expedient of not including any new music at all. But there was an apt regal connection in Handel's celebratory anthem *Zadok the Priest* – sung at every coronation since George II's – and a sprinkling of British works by Holst, Walton and Malcolm Arnold.

Sir Andrew Davis, a veteran of the Last Night of the Proms, brought both integrity and a touch of pizzazz to his conducting of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. This was a chance to celebrate the young as well as the seasoned and they do not come much younger than the prodigiously gifted 13-year-old clarinettist Julian Bliss. He played Messager's *Solo de Concours* with bravura. His agility was dazzling and won him one of the evening's most vigorous ovations.

The ever-popular Dame Kiri Te Kanawa performed arias by Bizet and Gershwin with her familiar charm and grace. The baritone Sir Thomas Allen, in prime characterful form, sang *Largo al factotum* from Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with swagger and sauce, and added a touch of nobility to that fine old song *The Yeomen of England* from Edward German's *Merrie England*.

There was perhaps a touch of irony in the fact that the pre-concert entertainment was provided by the Opera Babes and The Planets. In a recent speech, Sir Thomas questioned whether such "fusion" groups should bear the classical imprimatur, and they did indeed seem pretty insipid alongside the main programme.

For logistical as well as acoustical reasons, Mstislav Rostropovich's performance of a movement from a Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasilieras*, with the cellos of the London Symphony Orchestra, was given inside the palace but managed to convey its intensity on the big screens outside. So, too, did Roberto Bolle and Zenaida Yanowsky's dancing of the *Black Swan* pas de deux from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

With spirituals from the London Adventist Chorale and operatic excerpts by Puccini and Verdi sung by the lustrous husband-and-wife team of Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna, there was plenty of vocal allure, but, in true Proms fashion, nothing matched in sheer volume our lusty, 12,000-strong rendering of *Land of Hope and Glory*. Nobody could have gone away disappointed.

Geoffrey Norris



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Golden Jubilee

1952 2002

Thank you for fifty wonderful years

By Richard Alleyne
Nicole Martin
and P J Bonthrone

FOR all the formal tributes paid to the Queen yesterday, it was a mother-of-two from Yorkshire outside St George's Chapel, Windsor, who brought the biggest smile to her face.

As the monarch emerged from the 45-minute Service of Thanksgiving, Glenys Elrick, 53, rushed forward from the crowd and grabbed her hand.

"God bless you ma'am," she said, hardly able to contain her excitement. "Thank you for 50 wonderful years."

The Queen blushed slightly at such enthusiasm, before breaking out in a big smile. "Thank you," she replied. "Thank you so much."

The brief moment of informality was in contrast to the seriousness of proceedings inside the church.

The Queen had taken the jubilee opportunity to hold the first ecumenical service at the chapel, set in the grounds of Windsor Castle where her mother and sister were recently laid to rest.

The formal proceedings over, the Queen and Prince Philip went on a walkabout in the castle grounds to meet the crowd, hundreds strong in the summer sun despite the service clashing with England's opening World Cup match against Sweden.

The prince wasted no time finding out the score.

Noticing William Haycock, 23, was dressed in an England shirt, he wandered over and asked him if he had a radio.

''No,'' Mr Haycock, a chef, replied, "but we know it's 1-0 to England."

''That's good,'' the prince replied. Spotting Josh Slater, 10, sporting an England shirt but with a Welsh flag, he asked: "Why?"

When his mother, Yvonne, 38, who said the family originated from Wales but had moved to Hartlepool, added: "Do you know England are winning 1-0?", the prince joked: "I can see you have been listening to the service then."

Meanwhile, the Queen had just spoken to Mrs Elrick, who despite her obvious love of the monarchy, had a husband who appeared as obsessed by football as the prince.

Ray Elrick only agreed to drive his wife to Windsor as long as he could then go to the nearest pub to watch the match.

In Swansea, the young princes also put duty before pleasure, missing England's first World Cup match to attend a thanksgiving service with their father.

Just before the referee blew the half-time whistle in Japan, the princes arrived at St Mary's Church in Swansea.

A crowd of about 3,000 well-wishers, many waving Union flags, cheered and clapped in the sunshine as the princes, on their second official visit to Wales with their father, entered the church.

"I love you, William," yelled a blonde in the crowd, one of the scores of teenage girls who had squeezed themselves against the crush barriers in an attempt to catch a glimpse of the future King.

An hour later, by which time England had drawn with Sweden, father and sons emerged, their curiosity as to who won the match soon satisfied by a giant scoreboard which was held aloft in the crowd.

The cheers grew louder as the Royal party spent 20 minutes chatting to people, some of whom had waited for three hours to see them.

"William came over to me and shook my hand," said Ffion Barham, nine, who wore a Manchester United T-shirt. "He asked me if I had ever seen David Beckham play. I waited for a long time to see him but it was worth the wait. He is so handsome."

Later, the princes returned to Highgrove where they were expected to watch a video recording of the World Cup match. "Obviously, the boys were disappointed to have missed the match," said a spokesman for the Prince of Wales. "But they wanted to support the Queen in her jubilee year. They could have said 'no' if they didn't want to do it."

England's World Cup squad are expected to record a Golden Jubilee message to the Queen. Their video message is to be shown on a giant screen at Slough today when the Queen visits the town square to launch a nationwide jubilee music party.

Elsewhere, the Princess Royal attended a special service at St Columba Church in Ayr, while the Earl and Countess of Wessex attended a service at Salisbury Cathedral.

The Duke of Gloucester attended at Peterborough Cathedral, the Duchess of Gloucester at Liverpool Cathedral, Princess Alexandra at Winchester Cathedral and the Duke of Kent in Belfast.

The Archbishop of York made his tribute to the Queen in a sermon at a service of evensong in York Minster. Dr David Hope recalled how his family's black and white television had been delivered and set up in time for the Coronation service in June 1953.

''The ceremony itself was breathtaking. One of the main highlights which I can still remember was the moment of the anointing as the canopy was placed over Her Majesty and the Archbishop of Canterbury took the Holy Oil anointing her as kings and priests and prophets had been long ago and down the ages.''

Dr Hope said it had been "a truly awesome and potent sign amidst all the pageantry and splendour of the day that all power comes from God and all who exercise earthly power do so as a sacred trust".

Dr Hope said the spontaneous celebration up and down the country at the weekend had proved wrong the "depressing prognostications" of commentators who had written off the monarchy.

"Even at the start of this year, no one could have predicted the way in which this Golden Jubilee celebration might be received in the nation as a whole.''

Picture: BRIAN SMITH



Glenys Elrick, 53, from Yorkshire, grabs the Queen's hand outside St George's Chapel, Windsor, yesterday and cries 'God bless you, ma'am'

> 'The two princes were disappointed to have missed the game but wanted to support the Queen'

Leaders of faiths sign pledge to foster unity

By P J Bonthrone

A HISTORIC document committing English Church leaders to work together for greater Christian unity was signed in Windsor yesterday in the presence of the Queen.

The parties to the agreement – the first of its kind – were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey; the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor; the Free Churches Group Moderator, the Rev Tony Burnham; and the Rev Esme Beswick, representing smaller Churches.

The covenant, signed in the Vicars' Hall, Windsor Castle, commits the signatories to pray and work together, to consult each other and to join in working for justice.

It sets out their common understanding of the Christian faith and expresses their appreciation of the progress made in relation to unity between Churches.

The four Church leaders are each presidents of the ecumenical group, Churches Together in England, and met for consultations with other religious leaders at St George's House, Windsor, at the weekend.

A spokesman for Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor said last night: "Although the agreement does not put in place a particular series of talks or meetings, it is nevertheless significant. The fact that they have put their names to this is another step in the right direction."

A spokesman for Dr Carey said the covenant bound Church leaders, though not Churches, to work together. However, he added: "It is hoped that the leaders will take their Churches with them."

The Personal Covenant between the Presidents of Churches Together in England says: "We rejoice that the Churches in England are steadily growing closer in mutual trust and respect. We have in common many joys and hopes, and we have much to offer and to receive from one another in the rich diversity of our traditions."

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The service of her love



W.F. Deedes

notebook

It being a time for recollection as well as celebration for the older generation, I have been raking over what I remember best about royal anniversaries. Earliest among them was the slightly bewildered look of King George V at his Silver Jubilee in 1935 as he drove down the Mall to cheering crowds.

He was genuinely startled by the affection shown towards him. Only two years later, we were celebrating the Coronation of his second son, King George VI, and of that occasion I remember best his review of the Fleet.

From the deck of an aircraft carrier, some of us watched the Royal Yacht moving down the long lines of ships, perhaps never to be so grand again. Pink gin in our ship, I recall, cost only one penny, or tuppence for a double.

After Queen Elizabeth's Coronation, the RAF staged a big show and I remember it well, for last of all there flew past us, solitary and silent, the Hunter – eerily silent because it was faster than sound.

My companions were H E Bates, the author, and Lord Rhodes, who had been a popular minister in Attlee's government. The next day, he confided to me that later that evening, his wife, rarely given to tears, had broken down. "It was that plane," she explained. Women, he told to me quietly, may see further into these things than we do.

What many will recall and perhaps agree was the happiest scene of all was on the balcony at Buckingham Palace during the Golden Jubilee of VE Day in 1995. As the Queen, her mother and her sister stepped out, the Queen could be seen pressing her mother to break protocol and take first place.

When Coronation Day closed in May 1937, the Prime Minister made a short broadcast, greatly alarming the BBC because it was delivered off scribbled notes. When it came to that sort of thing, Baldwin shone and this is what he said: "Let us dedicate ourselves, let us dedicate ourselves afresh if need be, to the service of our fellows, a service in widening circles, service to the home, service to our neighbourhood, to our county, to our province, to our country, to the Empire and to the world.

"No mere service of our lips, service of our lives, as we know, will be the service of our King and Queen. God bless them!"

And, as now we know, that has also been the service of Queen Elizabeth II.

☐ PRESIDENT Bush's words at Memorial Day ceremonies in France were profoundly moving. Hailing the sacrifice of so many young Americans on Omaha Beach, he declared: "American soldiers came to liberate, not to conquer. The only land we claim as our own are the resting places of our men and women."

I have never felt sure how France views D-Day. After the debacle of 1940, it has never been easy for a proud race to feel grateful to the armies of other nations called upon to rescue a continent and redeem honour.

☐ THE demise of *Punch* illustrates how much has changed in half a century. It reached its prime in the First World War when "the cartoon" was by someone like Bernard Partridge, and domestic jokes kept the home fires burning.

They realised that era was over when they asked Malcolm Muggeridge to leave this newspaper and become *Punch*'s editor in 1953. Malcolm was to prepare *Punch* for the irreverent 1960s.

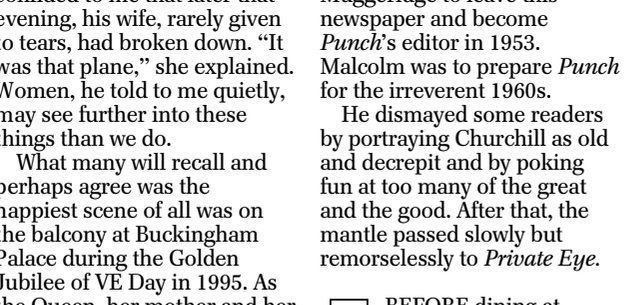
He dismayed some readers by portraying Churchill as old and decrepit and by poking fun at too many of the great and the good. After that, the mantle passed slowly but remorselessly to *Private Eye.*

☐ BEFORE dining at Somerville College, I took what Edwardians sometimes called a "dish of tea" at the Feathers Hotel in Woodstock. My companion poured the milk into our cups first, observing: "I know this is not altogether correct, but according to Channel 4, the milk fuses better with the tea this way round."

So now, when my imaginary Jeeves bustles in with a cup of early morning tea, I put the milk in first. Such is the power of auto-suggestion.

☐ FOR the first time this year I have caught a whiff of that delicious smell, hot sun slowly drying cut grass.

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Britain 50 years ago was run down and divided by class. **John Keegan** relives the decades of hope, rebellion and exasperation that led to a new appreciation of the monarch's role

The Queen who carried us out of the dead years



How has Britain changed in the 50 years since the Queen came to the throne? Has the Queen herself changed? The questions are not unconnected. Deny it though anti-monarchists do, the personality of the Queen permeates British life. A fascinating discovery of a social survey some years ago was that many of her subjects have recurrent dreams about meeting the Queen and holding conversations with her.

In their waking hours, of course, the British recognise that such encounters are fantasies. The Queen does not hold intimate conversations with her subjects, perhaps with no one at all except her husband. It is part of the royal mystique that the sovereign is intimate with no one outside her immediate family. This sovereign is notable for her reserve. The British do not like her any the less for that. Rather the contrary. Reserve, if obviously accompanied by integrity and the ethic of public duty, continues to be a quality that the British admire. The Queen qualifies on all those counts. She personifies the sort of human being the nation still thinks is ideally British – upright, moral, impartial, fair, patriotic, public-spirited.

It is true that the Queen is rich, immeasurably richer than almost any of her subjects, absolutely detached from the day-to-day financial concerns that afflict the rest of us and surrounded by the trappings of huge wealth – castles, carriages, footmen, Old Masters. On the other hand, the Queen does not seem to care. If detached from financial anxiety, she is equally detached from the habits of the international monied class. She does not go to the south of France, or go shopping, or go skiing. She does not give parties, except as a public duty. She notoriously does not spend money on clothes.

If asked how the Queen enjoys herself, most of her subjects, after a little thought, would say that she puts on her wellies and takes the dogs for a walk. It is true that she likes going to the races. Millions of her subjects also, however, like going to the races and even more of them know elderly, grey-haired ladies who like nothing better than taking the dogs for a walk.

Dream of her as they may, while the British do not know the Queen in any corporeal sense, they all know women like her. They are women, on the whole, whom they admire as grandmothers, heads of families, animal-lovers, members of the WI or the Townswomen's Guild, school governors, parish councillors. They are a bit stuffy, expect young people to mind their Ps and Qs, worry about what they read in the newspapers and perhaps think that Britain was a better place when they started out in life.

Yet does the Queen think that the Britain of 1952 was a better place – or, more pertinently, should she? The memories of those who grew up with her – I was born six years later than she, in 1934 – are likely to be mixed. Materially, the Britain of the time of her father's death and her coronation remains, in my mind, a dreary place. London, my home city, was still terribly knocked about by the Luftwaffe. There were huge areas of bomb damage and a universal absence of paint. Everything looked run-down, including the people. Rationing was still in force. In my first term as an Oxford undergraduate – a member of a very privileged and tiny minority – I had to take scraps of butter to hall for breakfast. I remember pasty faces in bus queues, universally drab clothes.

As the product of a single-sex school, I was looking forward to meeting girls at Oxford. Those on parade at my first lecture seemed the product of a practical joke – shapeless skirts, even more shapeless tops, rag-doll haircuts. "The aim," said Maureen Cleave, later a very glamorous *Evening Standard* journalist, "was to look 35. That was what our mothers wanted." Fifty five, I would have said. I did not have a girlfriend throughout my Oxford years.

On the other hand, spiritually there was hope in the air. Whatever one's political inclination – like most undergraduates of that time, I thought belonging to a political club boring, even stupid – there was general approval of the Attlee government's programme. Attlee's second Labour administration had just been defeated at the polls, but the return of Churchill as prime minister aroused little enthusiasm, the prospect of Eden's succession even less.

The Oxford undergraduates of the 1950s, with their Cambridge contemporaries an undoubted national elite, formed a tiny proportion of the school-leaving population but approved of almost every element of the Attlee programme: full employment, of course; the National Health Service, emphatically so; social welfare; social housing; equal educational opportunity for all able to pass the tests (most of us were at Oxford thanks to that criterion); above all, the idea of equal opportunity in every walk of life.

Like many of the generation of the Queen's accession, I look back on the 1950s as a golden age of hope and good feeling. Yet I suspect I see it through rose-tinted spectacles. The degree of snobbery that prevailed would be intolerable to today's generation. Because of National Service, which obliged all fit young males to serve, usually in the Army, the ideal of universal patriotic duty was strong.

The divisions between those judged suitable to be trained as officers and those judged not was equally strong also. It persisted into the university years. Worse, those who had been accepted into the smart regiments – Guards, Cavalry – brought with them an aura of exclusiveness. Everyone in my college knew exactly where National Service had placed their fellow undergraduates in the pecking order, which was as much social as military. It was reinforced by school backgrounds. Oxford and Cambridge in the 1950s were largely grammar-school universities, far less "elitist" than they are today. Socially, however, the public schools still dominated.

What was true of the small stage was true of the world beyond. Society remained divided into officers and other ranks, with the difference that the Armed Forces were not as admired as they are today. Because of the war, and persisting National Service, almost everyone had served, including the women of the war years, but there was no desire to perpetuate the "them and us" of service life. On the contrary, "us" wanted what they believed they had fought for: a fairer, better-paid, more secure way of life. The Attlee government had delivered the foundations: free hospitals and visits to the doctor, employment in industries – coal, steel, transport – owned by the state, a proper cushion against unemployment, the beginnings of comprehensive welfare.

Yet there was a paradox. The Attlee government, in its way, was officer class. Welfare came from on high, dispensed as if by Lord Bountiful. Despite the population of Old Labour by genuine proletarians, Ernie Bevin foremost, the Attlee government's ethos derived from his own – public school, officer class. Indeed, in a sense, it was colonial, its urge being that of the late imperial class to introduce a subject people to the benefits of enlightened administration.

That was not surprising since many of the Labour leaders had a background in imperial service. They knew the leaders of the Empire's independence movements, and were committed to granting them freedom, India first. The less evolved colonies could wait; Attlee's government was as strongly paternalist abroad as it was unconsciously at home. Yet there was little opposition to its policies of decolonisation. As Kipling had always suspected, British popular imperialism had shallow roots and, when the time came to say farewell to palm and pine, there were few regrets.

In this the Queen differed from her subjects, as she continues to do. Never empress of India, she became head of the Commonwealth with great enthusiasm, travelled in it widely and grew closely acquainted with its leaders, who deeply appreciated her attention. The British remained indifferent, believing that the imperial episode was over. They scarcely noticed the beginnings of immigration from the ex-empire. When they did, they displayed a remarkable impassivity. In 1952 Britain was a completely white country, with no non-Christian minorities, apart from the Jews. Its good-natured acceptance of several million cultural outsiders is one of the most remarkable features of its post-war life.

The British had much else to think about, particularly what Whitehall chose to discuss as "decline" – in international standing and in relative prosperity. Attlee's government had continued the dissipation of national wealth begun during the war, had borrowed from America to keep up expenditure and had also unleashed expectations, particularly for investment in social programmes, that it could not sustain.

Neither could any of its successor governments. Election after election returned parliaments – Labour and Conservative alternately – that did not know what to do. The period 1955 to 1979 must be reckoned one of the worst in Britain's political life, characterised by Cabinet ineffectuality and the intrusion into public affairs of unelected powers, particularly the large unions of the unskilled.

The dead years are today better remembered than the post-war time of hope, though the two periods are intrinsically connected. Much happened that was important, particularly the waging of the Cold War, but foreign policy, except through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, impinged little on public consciousness. Cultural change did, the permissiveness of the 1960s decisively altering behaviour and outlook for good and ill. It deeply undermined the "officers" and "others" basis of society, to Britain's benefit, but it also weakened the stability of family life and the solidarity of old communities, first disturbed by the upheaval and destruction of the war.

It also set in train the movement of public admiration from one sort of icon to another, from those supplied by traditional hierarchy – the Royal Family foremost – to those supplied by defiance of convention. The Beatles, superficially unconventional, were the first such celebrities, subsequently to be replaced with bewildering frequency by an insatiable media appetite for sensation, decreasingly arresting.

Yet beneath the pall of the dead years, the public life of the nation survived. Exasperation became the strongest mood, expressed eventually in the election of a government that at last did seem to know what to do. In a little over 10 years, Margaret Thatcher found ways both to pay for the cherished public programmes of 1945-51, largely by forcing denationalised industries back into profit, and to compel the unions that fed on them to behave themselves. It was an extraordinary exercise both of political intelligence and political will.

It is today not much appreciated. Blairism is a strange reversion, imputing to the Tory years immediately preceding it the inegalitarian faults that Attlee identified and largely cured. Social exclusiveness was real in the 1940s, as was lack of opportunity. Both have almost disappeared in my lifetime. Mediocre comprehensives are palaces of learning compared with the secondary moderns of 50 years ago. Hospitals – I am a survivor of old-style long-stay healthcare – are five-star hotels. As far as life in general is concerned, my generation would say that today anybody can achieve anything, if they are prepared to try.

Many are prepared to try and do achieve. Something, however, has been lost. My long illness in youth exposed me to an unusual experience for a member of the middle class – immersion for three years in a completely working-class environment. Most of my fellow patients in the orthopaedic hospital where I spent 1947-50 were young former Servicemen from inner London, the Elephant, the Borough, the Old Kent Road. Many had contracted orthopaedic TB, rather fewer had survived polio. It is an index of how life has changed that polio has disappeared and orthopaedic TB is today scarcely seen. Indeed, the open air hospital in which we were treated has been knocked down as redundant and the site is today occupied by a private housing estate.

All that is absolutely to the good. Yet I look back to those three years with considerable nostalgia. The spirit of my fellow patients was admirable. They would not have known what "dependency" meant and would have despised it if they did. Wracked with ghastly disabilities as they were, their one thought was to get better so that they could return to work. They looked forward, literally, to standing on their own feet again. They did not expect state support nor seek it. Moreover, they had standards and values.

There was a curious respect for education, though few had any, and a habit of good manners. Because we were nursed by young unmarried women, public opinion on the ward banned both bad language and sexual innuendo. Anyone who broke the rules was denounced as "ignorant", the ultimate condemnation.

That self reliance and highly moral working-class culture has been undermined in my lifetime by an artificial culture, propagated by a new university-educated class, of welfare entitlement and "social inclusion". Social inclusion forbids overt disapproval of much behaviour by which my fellow patients would have been outraged and tolerates habits of selfishness and fecklessness entirely alien to their outlook.

It is fostered, of course, by the modern media which, by a hypocritical combination of denunciation and celebration, relentlessly propagate bad behaviour, particularly by portraying it on television. Indeed there is a curious community of interest between many media people and others in the so-called caring professions, based on their exposure during education and training to believe in the "unfairness" of the "system", an outlook that has come to be called political correctness.

It says a great deal for the fundamental common sense of the British that so many of them retain a healthy scepticism about political correctness. One of the reasons why the Queen, after 50 years, seems to grow in popularity, as her reception in recent weeks during her tour of her kingdom demonstrates, is that there is nothing politically correct about her. Of course, in one sense, political correctness is simply common politeness, tolerance and kindness, and those qualities the Queen has in abundance. For the sillier side of political correctness, the refusal to distinguish between good and evil or truth and falsehood, she patently has no time at all. She is a deeply devout Christian, as she is increasingly willing to reveal, and there is steel in her character. Given the chance, extended to and exercised by her sweet-natured and utterly upright father during the Second World War, to exert moral leadership, who can doubt that she would take it?

Indeed she has already done so. A principal weakness of Blairism is that, while the Prime Minister exemplifies in his personal life the Christian beliefs, particularly about the sanctity of marriage, which he is known to hold, he lacks the self confidence to state his creed in plain language. The Queen does not. Indeed, her Christmas broadcasts become evermore explicit expressions of the Christian message and she demonstrates her inmost feelings by the choice of those she favours in public life. Her award of the Order of Merit to Cardinal Hume, just before his death, beside giving great joy to her Catholic subjects, also indicated her recognition of the importance of simple goodness in human beings.

Can she go further? As she has travelled around Britain these past months, she must have noticed how drab and decrepit so many of our towns and cities still look, nearly 60 years after the war. Much post-war rebuilding actually added to the eyesores the Luftwaffe left. While the architects of the four Georgian kings built magnificently, and Victoria presided over the creation of most of our great public monuments, the town planners and developers of my lifetime seem to have gloried in leaving ugliness behind them. The Queen is not notable as a leader of taste but she has greatly beautified Buckingham Palace by building a new gallery for the public. Perhaps in her declining yeas she will inaugurate a new era of royal architectural patronage. Most of Europe's heritage is owed to monarchs. What a conclusion to her reign the undertaking of a new heritage townscape would be.

The Daily Telegraph

Est 1855

An annual register

Life has changed a little over the past 50 years. On the occasion of the Queen's Golden Jubilee, here are some of the events that have defined and altered the way we live now.

1952 The first jet passenger flight leaves London for Johannesburg.
1953 20th Century Fox introduces stereo sound and Cinemascope wide screens.
1954 The government announces that meat rationing will end after 14 years.
1955 Ruth Ellis is executed at Holloway prison, the last woman to be hanged in Britain.
1956 John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* opens at the Royal Court Theatre.
1957 Bill Haley and the Comets tour England. His song *See You Later, Alligator*, and the reply, "In a while, crocodile", were said to be popular farewell remarks in Princess Margaret's set.
1958 Yves Saint Laurent's first Paris collection.
1959 First full-scale hovercraft built on the Isle of Wight.
1960 Elvis Presley makes his one visit to Britain, stopping off at Prestwick airport, Glasgow, on the way back from national service in Germany.
1961 First oral contraceptive, Conovid, made available.
1962 Beatles rejected by Decca, whose experts believe they will never make it into the charts.
1963 Peerage Bill allows Tony Benn, the reluctant Viscount Stansgate, to stand as an MP.
1964 *Steptoe & Son* declared Britain's most popular television show, with 26 million viewers in 9,653,000 homes tuning in.
1965 The prime ministers of Northern Ireland (Terence O'Neill) and the Irish Republic (Sean Lemass) meet for the first time on Irish soil since their two parliaments were established in 1921.
1966 The first official meeting in 400 years between the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury takes place in Rome.
1967 *The Boy's Own Paper* folds on its 88th anniversary.
1968 Enoch Powell is sacked from the Conservative shadow cabinet for his "Rivers of Blood" speech concerning the effects of mass immigration.
1969 Kray twins found guilty of murder.
1970 *Oh! Calcutta!* opens at the Round House, London.
1971 Decimalisation. Cadbury mints chocolate decimal coins to help the transition.
1972 Ford Granada introduced.
1973 Britain joins the European Economic Community.
1974 Lady Lucan runs into a Belgravia pub, screaming: "He's murdered my nanny! My children, my children!"
1975 Margaret Thatcher says of her Tory leadership victory: "I beat four chaps. Now let's get down to work."
1976 Denis Howell created "Minister for Drought".
1977 *Star Wars* the biggest box office hit of all time.
1978 It is estimated that Dutch elm disease has killed off 30 million trees in the previous decade.
1979 Trevor Francis becomes Britain's first million-pound footballer.
1980 SAS ends Iranian embassy siege in an 11-minute operation.
1981 Prince of Wales marries Lady Diana Spencer.
1982 Task force liberates the Falkland Islands after Argentine invasion.
1983 The compact disc is introduced.
1984 James F Fixx, the man who converted America to jogging, dies mid-run.
1985 PC Keith Blakelock is murdered in a riot at the Broadwater Farm estate, Tottenham.
1986 England knocked out of the World Cup, not helped by Diego Maradona's "hand of God".
1987 British Telecom starts replacing its red kiosks.
1988 New Licensing Act means pubs can stay open from 11am to 11pm on weekdays.
1989 Ayatollah Khomeini orders the execution of Salman Rushdie for his book *The Satanic Verses*.
1990 Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web.
1991 After a month of air attacks and a 100-hour land war, Saddam Hussein is driven out of Kuwait.
1992 Betty Boothroyd is the first woman in six centuries to be Speaker of the House of Commons.
1993 Two-year-old James Bulger murdered in Liverpool.
1994 Tony Blair beats John Prescott to become Labour's youngest ever leader.
1995 Nick Leeson arrested in Frankfurt after the collapse of Barings Bank.
1996 Stone of Scone, part of the coronation seat in Westminster Abbey since the 14th century, returned to Scotland.
1997 Hong Kong handed over to China.
1998 Sean Stewart, 12, becomes the youngest father in Britain.
1999 Scottish Parliament sits for the first time.
2000 *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* breaks all previous records by selling a third of a million copies on its first day of release.
2001 First case of foot and mouth for 20 years discovered at an Essex abattoir.
2002 The last veteran of the Gallipoli campaign dies in Tasmania, aged 103.

Wills and woes

The sacking and re-appointment of Michael Wills in the Prime Minister's reshuffle appears to be the most dramatic resurrection since Lazarus. On Wednesday, Mr Wills was removed from his post at the Lord Chancellor's department. Three days later, he is back as an unpaid junior minister. According to some reports, Gordon Brown exploded over his departure; Mr Wills says he was promised another job all along. What there is no disagreement on is that Mr Wills has moved from one job as "patriotism minister" to another – as unpaid minister for information technology and criminal justice in the Home Office. He obviously needs the work experience.

Mr Wills won't be allowed to echo Gen Douglas MacArthur – who triumphantly declared: "I have returned" upon landing in the Philippines after his expulsion by the Japanese. That, of course, would be off-message. None the less, the episode speaks volumes about the Government: the rumours (unconvincingly denied) of almost childlike spats between Mr Blair and Mr Brown; the new Orwellian titles dreamt up as part of a sub-Clintonic attempt to "reinvent government"; and a blend of over-anxious modernity and authoritarianism, exemplified by the yoking together of "information technology" with "criminal justice". The next phase of Mr Wills's snakes and ladders-like progress should surely be as minister of propaganda and enlightenment.

Trevor McDonald's Anthology



EDWARD THOMAS met Robert Frost in 1913 and, encouraged by the American poet, made the transition from writing prose to poetry. Perhaps it was as simple as that and perhaps Frost's influence was crucial. What is incontrovertible is that Thomas took to writing poetry with the ease of someone who had in his blood the art of writing verse. He applied to the poems the same lofty principles he observed in all his writing. He believed in the elegance of simple language and he avoided anything tortuous or complicated. This poem is a shining example of that.

Lights Out by Edward Thomas

I have come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track
That, since the dawn's first crack,
Up to the forest brink,
Deceived the travellers,
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends;
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter, and leave, alone,
I know not how.

The tall forest towers;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf,
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

From The Works of Edward Thomas *(Wordsworth Editions, 1994)*

1 Canada Square, London, E14 5DT. Telephone: 020 7538 5000 Fax: 020 7538 6455 E-mail: dtletters@telegraph.co.uk

Letters to the Editor

GM drama critic has altered his views

SIR – It may be dull to say so, but a reasonable and open debate about *Fields of Gold*, the BBC drama that I have written with Ronan Bennett, is only possible once the programme has been shown. Though you have done your best to give away the plot, the themes of the drama are rather different from your own partial account.

Your leading article (June 1), besides advancing the interesting notion of "responsible drama", displays a touching belief that there is scientific unanimity on the issues in the background of the film. There isn't. Mark Tester has even changed his own views in significant respects since being asked for an opinion by the BBC last summer. So when he appeals for the writers to be "big enough" to acknowledge mistakes, he is not, I'm afraid, being quite open.

He now condemns the drama for showing the possibility of transfer of modified genes from crops to humans. Yet, in his original advice to the BBC, he stated that there were scientists who believed this could happen and those who didn't. "I remain open-minded," he wrote.

He then went on to suggest a number of ways in which we could show that transfer had, indeed, happened. These included a character chewing on the wheat, working in the fields, or cutting himself in the fields. In other words, Dr Tester's advice last summer was that it was a legitimate scientific premise for the drama. His only concern was that it should be dramatically explicit.

He now rejects the implication in the film that plasmids and dust from the field could spread antibiotic resistance. Last summer, he thought this of little consequence. He wrote: "In the heat of the final scene, no one there need think that through rationally."

Dr Tester says he is against inflammatory anti-GM dramas. During the course of a conversation last week, he suggested a much more alarming scenario we could have used involving genetically engineered Bt toxins and how they accumulate in soil. We're thinking about it.

Alan Rusbridger
Hay-on-Wye, Powys

Time to act

SIR – The views of the chairman of the fisheries committee of the European Parliament, Struan Stevenson MEP, and the British fisheries minister, Elliot Morley MP (letters, June 1), concerning the European Commission's present proposals for future fishing policy, make interesting reading. It is obvious that any agreement will deliver both winners and losers. The British fishing industry is likely to fall into the latter category.

However, what both correspondents failed to mention is what the position will be if no agreement is struck by the end of this year when Britain's derogation expires. We shall then see the real Common Fisheries Policy being implemented, with the Commission introducing a rigid, centrally controlled management system to comply with the terms of the Treaty of Corfu, agreed by all member states in 1994. Complete integration is, after all, the *raison d'être* of the EU.

If Britain wishes to reverse the disastrous environmental record of EU fisheries policy, it has to bite the bullet and bring back national control up to the 200-mile/median line.

Ann Winterton MP (Con)
London SW1

Remember the naval officer who took over one of the King's 'ships'

SIR – In the autumn of 1947, the six commanders who manned the Operations Division of the Naval Staff were agreeably surprised to be joined by Lieutenant (Acting Lieutenant Commander) Prince Philip RN. We worked in pairs, so that when one's "opposite number" was on leave, one could drive his desk.

The day came when Prince Philip, having taken over, as I recall, the Mediterranean station and the Navy's minesweeping force, confided that he was going to lunch at Buckingham Palace.

"I'm going to ask the monarch if I may have command of one of his ships," he said. "You see, when I marry his daughter, to be captain of one of HM's ships will give me a standing professionally; and I probably won't be able to go on serving that much longer in the Navy."

Later, having lunched well, a cheerful Prince Philip announced: "It's in the bag. The monarch's going to speak to the First Sea Lord tomorrow." In due course, there came a Christmas card, with a photograph of HMS Magpie and the inscription: "Here she is! Philip."

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's experience of life as a "naval wife" was cut short, but at her Jubilee, let us not forget the naval officer who has so devotedly helped her to take the strain of sovereignty.

Vice-Adml Sir Ian McGeoch
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

SIR – Having heard and read so much earlier this year about the Queen Mother's propensity to dissolve into giggles, I was reminded of an occasion during the war when I saw our present Queen battling with the same problem.

It was on February 26, 1943, when she was the 17-year-old Princess Elizabeth and I was a 20-year-old member of the WRNS. We were both being enrolled into the Sea Rangers, in the dust-sheeted St George's Hall in Windsor Castle.

It was quite a solemn occasion, which was watched by her mother, the Queen, and, as I was lucky enough to live nearby, by my mother and father as well. I was standing next to Princess Elizabeth when she suddenly dissolved into giggles. I never found out what started it off, but it was horribly infectious and we both had difficulty in regaining the required solemnity.

It would be lovely to think that, when in the privacy of her family, she is still able to indulge in this happy state.

Laura Barlee
Slapton, Devon

SIR – In my constituency of Windsor today, the art of ox-roasting will be demonstrated as part of the celebrations of the Queen's Golden Jubilee, 67 years after her grandfather's Silver Jubilee in 1935.

After a parade through the town, at which the Queen will take the salute, we shall repair to Bachelors Acre, where the Governor of the Castle will cut the first ceremonial slice at one o'clock. The ox will be roasted by members of the Household Cavalry, ably assisted by experts from Cornwall. Mindful of the Queen's observation that we must look to the future as well as the past, we have a steel band and pop group as part of the entertainment alongside our ox.

Windsor roasted the beast on the occasion of the jubilees of George III and Victoria. Our celebration will be an appropriate and fun way of recognising that our links with the Royal Family go back a long way, but remain as strong as ever today.

Michael Trend MP (Con)
London SW1

SIR – Many towns and villages across Britain may still be considering some permanent recognition for the Golden Jubilee year. On a recent visit to the village of Corfe, near Taunton in Somerset, we came across the "Queen's Acre", a plot for use by the community, in posterity, for sports days, wedding receptions and the like which, to this day, marks Queen Victoria's 50th anniversary.

On the wall of the adjacent village hall, the plaque reads: "Queen's Acre. This village green has been given to the parishioners of Corfe on June 20, 1887, in loving and grateful commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Queen Victoria's happy Reign. It is earnestly hoped that Divine Service may never be disturbed by them and that all will join in protecting from harm what is meant for the general joymaking. God Save the Queen!"

George Yeaman
Portishead, Somerset

SIR – Ian Bradley appealed for a decent song for the Jubilee (Comment, May 27). He may like to know that there is indeed a Jubilee song that is being joyfully sung across the country.

Written by Tolga Kashif, with additional lyrics by Richard Stilgoe, *Drop in the Ocean* is an uplifting song suitable for children and young people. Lesley Garrett launched the song at the Commonwealth Day Observance service at Westminster Abbey in March. It is estimated that more than half a million under-18s will perform the song at events throughout 2002.

David Sulkin
National Foundation for Youth Music
London SE1

SIR – I have just come across a booklet of 14 hymns for the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Among them are two verses of the National Anthem written for the Jubilee:

Lift we both heart and voice
With one accord rejoice
On this glad day.
On our Queen's Jubilee
Bend we to God the knee
Singing right heartily
God save the Queen.

God hear our nation's prayer
Safe in Thy loving care,
Guard Thou our Queen.
Ruler of earth and sea,
Through all eternity
In one blest Jubilee
Keep Thou our Queen.

William John Tavernor
Market Drayton, Shropshire

Reversal of fortune

SIR – As a fellow liberator of Antwerp, my heartfelt sympathy goes out to Simon Woolf (letters, June 1). I know just how he feels; I felt much the same when, on a later tour of duty in 1947, I dodged anti-British bullets in the streets of Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv.

Peter Erwood
Fleet Hargate, Lincs

Poetry appreciation

SIR – Your obituary of the Irish playwright John B. Keane (May 31) reminds me of an occasion when I was introduced to him in Dublin in the mid-1960s. It was at a reception given by the Department of External Affairs (later Foreign Affairs). As it happened, a poem of mine had appeared a few days earlier in the *Irish Times*.

After hearing my name, Mr Keane's first words were: "I read your poem in the *Times* and it was no ----ing good." It was not, as I recall, the start of a long conversation, but part of me applauded Mr Keane's unhesitating frankness.

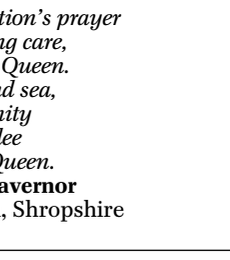
It is Ireland's good fortune to be well endowed with such colourful characters; long may the country keep breeding them.

Sir Rivers Carew
Cambridge

We accept letters by post, fax and e-mail only. Please include name, address, work and home telephone numbers.

Edited by **Robert Meakin** e-mail: pboro@telegraph.co.uk

Peterborough



The decision to stage two Golden Jubilee concerts at Buckingham Palace has caused something of a problem for the nation's political leaders.

While Iain Duncan Smith preferred to attend the Prom at the Palace on Saturday night, both Tony Blair and Charles Kennedy have instead opted for today's pop event.

"Blair had been expected to attend the classical concert, but changed his mind. Apparently, he thought the other event would be rather more popular," I'm told. "Kennedy is another big rock fan, particularly when it comes to David Bowie; but Duncan Smith is known to prefer classical music."

Downing Street is keen to play down Blair's preference for Sir Paul McCartney over Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. "It's really not based on anything like that. He's attending all kinds of Jubilee events over the next few days," I'm hastily assured. Meanwhile, a Duncan Smith spokesman insists: "Saturday's concert simply suited Iain's schedule better."

THE Queen's Coronation in 1953 was the first to be televised – a development that was less than popular with certain prestigious guests on the day.

Critics included Winston Churchill, who was heard to remark: "I don't see why the BBC should have a better view of my monarch being crowned than me."

WHEN still a relative newcomer to Buckingham Palace, the Duke of Edinburgh was rather mystified by certain long-established royal perks. Curious as to why a fresh bottle of whisky appeared in the Queen's bedroom every night, the Duke launched a personal investigation into the matter.

A lengthy search through the palace archives revealed that Queen Victoria, suffering from a cold one day, had requested that a bottle of scotch be sent to her room – and royal staff dutifully maintained the tradition from that day on.

DURING his stint as postmaster general, Tony Benn was eager to modernise the nation's stamps, suggesting that the monarch's head should be removed from certain new designs.

In his diaries, Benn recalls the Queen being in broad agreement when he put the idea to her. "I went back to the House of Commons feeling absolutely on top of the world," he wrote.

However, Benn later discovered all was not as it had first seemed. Prime minister Harold Wilson explained to him: "She's a nice woman and you absolutely charmed her into saying yes when she didn't really mean it."

THE Queen is unlikely ever to forget her first visit as monarch to Trinity College, Oxford. Proceedings got off to an alarming start when the lord lieutenant, Lord Macclesfield, passed out over lunch. Clearly distressed by her husband's predicament, Lady Macclesfield duly followed suit, fainting moments later (both recovered before very long).

However, it was Harold Macmillan, prime minister and university chancellor at the time, who stole the show. After proposing a toast, Macmillan attempted to sit back down, with disastrous results. One observer recalls: "The chair behind, where the vigilant scout Mr Mulligan had been stationed for its withdrawal and propulsion, refused to move forward into place. It had become entangled in the chancellor's gown and Mr Macmillan sat down on thin air and almost to the ground, before the situation could be retrieved."



Gifted mimic: the Queen does an uncanny Eliza Doolittle

On leaving the scene, the Queen remarked: "We've had a wonderful lunch; bodies all over the place."

WHEN advised by courtiers to withdraw the Royal Warrant from Harrods, the Queen was heard to protest: "But we'll starve!"

CONCERNED by the unprecedented level of press attention being received by the newly married Prince and Princess of Wales, the Queen once summoned Fleet Street editors to Buckingham Palace. An encounter with the then *News of the World* editor Barry Askew proved to be particularly frosty. Askew remarked: "If Lady Di wants to buy wine gums without being photographed, why doesn't she send a servant?" The Queen promptly replied: "What a pompous man you are."

THE Queen has long been considered to be a gifted mimic. It's said that among her vast repertoire of voices is an uncanny portrayal of Eliza Doolittle.

HAROLD Wilson enjoyed a particularly warm relationship with the Queen during his time in Downing Street; the pair shared a mutual love of gossip.

Indeed, the two became increasingly competitive when it came to knowing the latest tittle-tattle. One source of fascination for them was the case of "The Spanking Colonel" – Lieutenant Colonel John Brooks – whose alleged antics with young female guests on his boat hit the headlines back in 1974.

On discovering that Wilson had beaten her to the latest update in the *Evening Standard*, a distinctly miffed monarch complained to her private secretary: "Why didn't I have that edition?"

THE Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh regularly enjoy a night in front of the television. Apparently, this can often prove to be less relaxing than one imagines, with Prince Philip known to jump regularly out of his chair, shouting: "What a load of rubbish!" at the screen.